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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations:
Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization;
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is prepared pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly in a number of resolutions, in which the Assembly noted with satisfaction the active participation of regional and other organizations in the work of the United Nations. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolutions at its sixty-first session. As requested by the Assembly in paragraph 4 (t) of the annex to resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, various reports on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations are being submitted to the Assembly as a single consolidated report.

* A/61/150.

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Part One
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations

I. Introduction

1. Part One of the present report has been prepared pursuant to 12 resolutions, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the cooperation between a number of regional and other intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations.

2. The United Nations has since 1994 convened six high-level meetings with the heads of regional and other intergovernmental organizations. The seventh such meeting will be held in September 2006. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) also called for a number of measures to strengthen United Nations cooperation with regional and other intergovernmental organizations. The seventh high-level meeting in September 2006 will address Africa as the main theme of the meeting and will discuss, among other things, ways and means of implementing the 2005 World Summit Outcome 10-year capacity-building plan for the African Union (AU).

3. The Security Council, in its resolution 1631 (2005), invited the Secretary-General to report on the opportunities and challenges facing the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. A report on this matter will be submitted to the Security Council meeting with regional organizations scheduled before the seventh high-level meeting. The Secretary-General will also submit it to the General Assembly, in response to resolution 57/337 (annex, para. 37).

II. African Union

4. The United Nations has always attached great importance to its relations with the African Union, which date back to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) period. In its resolution 52/220, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations liaison office with the OAU. However, since the advent of the AU and the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), United Nations-AU cooperation has taken on particular importance.

5. In its resolution 57/48, the General Assembly urged the United Nations to contribute to the enhancement of the capacity of the AU to deploy peace support missions. The Secretary-General has further issued a report on the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity (A/59/591). In welcoming the report, the General Assembly called on the United Nations, in collaboration with the key strategic partners, to enhance support to the AU in its efforts to develop a capacity to undertake and manage peacekeeping operations in Africa.

6. The United Nations has since established a small assistance cell at the headquarters of the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Sudan, with the primary task of supporting the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). The AU is also in the

process of developing a peace and security architecture for the continent. The United Nations has been working closely with the AU Commission in this endeavour, notably in the establishment of the African Standby Force, which consists of five subregional brigades. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations is in the process of establishing an integrated team to support AU peacekeeping capacity-building goals. Consultations with the AU Commission are under way to elaborate a joint action plan for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations support to the objectives of the AU.

7. During the period under review, a delegation of the Security Council visited the AU Commission to exchange views on issues of common interest. For the first time, members of the Security Council also met with members of the AU Peace and Security Council to give fresh impetus to United Nations-AU cooperation.

8. In 2005, the 2005 World Summit Outcome called for a 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union. The United Nations, guided by that decision, has continued to give priority in its cooperation with the African Union to the strengthening of its capacities in various areas. Cooperation has included the training attachment of the AU Commission staff members at the United Nations headquarters in matters relating to early warning systems and peace and security. The most recent concerns the training of some AU officials in an effort to enhance the capacity of the secretariat of the AU Peace and Security Council.

9. In the context of economic and social cooperation, the United Nations has developed a regional capacity-building initiative project on the theme "Strengthening parliaments' information systems in Africa", which aims to enhance cooperation with the AU Pan-African Parliament. During the period under review, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) continued its long-standing and extensive relationship with AU by providing support in the development of various institutions of the AU. The collaboration between the two organizations covers a wide range of issues, including the implementation of NEPAD, promoting regional economic integration and providing support to African countries in preparing for major global conferences. A major achievement in these relations is the understanding to establish the African Development Forum as a platform for discussion and consensus-building on actions needed for confronting emerging challenges to African development.

10. On disarmament issues, collaboration with the AU is focused on the work of the consultative mechanism for the reorganization of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament for Africa established by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/86. In January 2006, at its sixth Conference of Heads of State and Government in Khartoum, the AU Executive Council reviewed the situation of the Regional Centre and adopted a decision calling for AU member States to support the operations of the Centre through voluntary contributions.

11. The United Nations agencies, most of which are present in Addis Ababa, collaborate with the AU Commission through various programmes of cooperation. In 2004, the World Food Programme (WFP) opened a liaison office to the AU and ECA in Addis Ababa to enhance cooperation and forge a closer working relationship with the two organizations.

12. Addressing the issues of human settlements, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has embarked on a two-track strategy to work with the AU and NEPAD to bring the challenges of the continent's rapid urbanization to the forefront of Africa's development agenda. In the fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), through high-level advocacy, the provision of information, and technical and financial assistance has continued to support the AU in the development and operationalization of the AU strategy on HIV/AIDS. This builds upon existing continental frameworks, such as NEPAD, and is in line with the continental priorities.

13. On trade and development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the AU joined forces in substantive capacity-building activities related to preparations for the Sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continues to cooperate with the joint United Nations-AU Secretariat of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region by providing technical inputs for the potential creation of a regional information and communication council.

14. As the United Nations system continues to work in close partnership with the AU, more and more attention will be paid to strategies geared towards the consolidation of peace and reconciliation. The endorsement of the AU framework for post-conflict reconstruction and development by the AU Assembly at its seventh ordinary session, held in Banjul, Gambia, in July 2006, is a welcome development in this regard. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission also provides the opportunity for the United Nations and the AU to work together to assist African countries emerging from conflict.

15. Consolidating the culture of democracy in Africa would also greatly contribute to the stability of the continent. In this regard the decision of the AU summit in Banjul, which approved the establishment of a democracy and electoral assistance unit and a democracy and electoral assistance special fund, is noted. The United Nations, while building on what has been achieved thus far through the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs in the area of electoral assistance, could assist the AU as the Commission begins to implement the decisions to establish the unit and the fund. Furthermore, the AU may also avail itself of the assistance of the United Nations Democracy Fund.

16. The United Nations as a family considers the reinforcement of its cooperation with the AU as an important step towards strengthening the capacity of the continental body. However, the impact of United Nations assistance on the AU could be strengthened by reinforced coordination among the various United Nations actors operating on the ground. As a way forward it is imperative, bearing in mind the respective mandates of the United Nations agencies concerned, to have comprehensive cooperation and coordination to avoid duplication of efforts. It is for this reason that the 10-year plan for the capacity-building of the AU should be conceived as the overall strategic framework under which the United Nations system can enhance its various activities in Africa and its cooperation with the AU. Therefore, it should cover all aspects of United Nations assistance to the AU.

III. Association of Southeast Asian Nations

17. In accordance with resolution 59/5, which encouraged the two organizations to further increase contacts and strengthen areas of cooperation, the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held their second summit at United Nations Headquarters on 13 September 2005, on the sidelines of the 2005 World Summit. The meeting was chaired jointly by the Secretary-General and Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia, the rotating Chair of the ASEAN Standing Committee, and was attended by the Heads of State and Government of all 10 ASEAN countries, as well as the heads of various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

18. The joint communique adopted at the summit expressed satisfaction with the track record of the ASEAN-United Nations relations since its inception in 1977. The ASEAN leaders expressed appreciation for United Nations support for the ASEAN goal of realizing the ASEAN Community as envisaged under the Declaration of ASEAN II (Bali Concord II) with the ASEAN Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural Communities as its three pillars. The United Nations welcomed the ASEAN decision to establish an ASEAN charter as it moves towards realizing an ASEAN Community. The United Nations also welcomed the possibility of ASEAN seeking observer status with the United Nations.

19. As called for by the communique, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, the Universiti Teknologi MARA and the ASEAN secretariat organized the fifth United Nations-ASEAN Regional Seminar on Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Southeast Asia in May 2006. Through the regional seminars, also held in Bangkok, Manila, Singapore and Jakarta since 2001, suggestions have been made regarding several areas. Two specific recommendations are United Nations participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the principal regional process organized by ASEAN to engage its dialogue partners and others in the Asia-Pacific region for confidence-building and cooperation activities, and the exchange of staff between the United Nations and the ASEAN secretariat.

20. The joint communique of the thirty-ninth ASEAN ministerial meeting issued in Kuala Lumpur on 25 July 2006 recalled that during the second ASEAN-United Nations summit, it was agreed that ASEAN-United Nations cooperation needed to be further broadened with the involvement of the various United Nations specialized agencies to encompass all areas related to community building. This pertains to key issues related to development, in particular poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals, prevention and control of infectious diseases, disaster management, transnational issues, trade and investment, as well as peace and security.

21. Several United Nations offices and agencies including UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) attended the meetings of the ASEAN Regional Forum. UNDP, which has partnered with the ASEAN secretariat since its formation, has supported five cycles of the ASEAN support programme. The most recent initiative, the ASEAN-UNDP Partnership, was launched during the ASEAN post-ministerial conference in Phnom Penh in 2003. Other United Nations agencies and offices are closely cooperating and collaborating with member nations of ASEAN and the ASEAN secretariat in their respective areas of operation.

IV. Caribbean Community

22. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/138, the Department of Political Affairs has started consultations with the secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the holding of the fourth general meeting between representatives of CARICOM and its associated institutions and the United Nations system. Participants will review and appraise progress in the implementation of CARICOM-United Nations cooperation and hold consultations on such additional measures and procedures as may be required to facilitate and strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. The meeting is scheduled to be held in the Caribbean region in 2006.

23. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, in cooperation with CARICOM and other partners, organized a series of subregional workshops on the import and export of firearms and in-transit firearms. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held informal consultations with the CARICOM secretariat on strengthening cooperation in information sharing and activity coordination, as well as on the organization of the Ministerial Conference on International Cooperation in the Fight against Terrorism and Organized Crime scheduled for August 2006. Earlier this year, UNODC organized a high-level seminar on the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Barbados and agreed to provide technical assistance to eastern Caribbean countries for translating the Convention into their national legislation.

24. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has promoted increased Caribbean participation in the United Nations global summits, particularly focusing on sustainable and social development, statistics and gender issues. A regional coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[1] is being established. ECLAC and CARICOM are cooperating in preparations for the 2010 round of censuses in the Caribbean region. Efforts are under way to involve Caribbean countries fully in eLAC, the 2007 Regional Action Plan for the information society for the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

25. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and CARICOM concluded a number of memorandums of understanding related to the preparation for international conferences, the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and joint workshops. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development helped to facilitate CARICOM Treaty application on competition policy and consumer protection. A regional training course on these matters was held in April 2005. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported the formulation, resource mobilization and implementation of regional food security programmes and the harmonization of agricultural and trade policies, including support in developing a common market for food products.

26. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization supported capacity development and related programmes of the CARICOM secretariat. This included improving the quality of early childhood education by

[1] A/CONF.207/11, annex II.

producing regional unified standards through national policy reviews in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); strengthening the response of the education systems to the HIV/AIDS epidemic by building awareness and capacity; reinforcing education data collection and analysis; building distance learning capacity in five universities across the region; supporting CARISCIENCE as a regional mechanism on science, technology and innovation and on building a regional science education policy that can be adapted to national needs. UNESCO Jamaica participated in the CARICOM secretariat process of reviewing the regional priorities for youth development.

27. The United Nation Programme on HIV/AIDS has worked closely with the CARICOM-Pan-Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS in the implementation of regional World Bank-financed projects strengthening information systems and support to vulnerable groups. It assisted countries to find a common position on the issue of universal access by 2010 through consultations at the national, subregional and regional levels. A mechanism to facilitate regional cooperation on HIV/AIDS was established in March 2006.

V. Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries

28. Subsequent to the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) being granted observer status on 21 October 2005, General Assembly resolution 59/21 on cooperation between the United Nations and CPLP was adopted by the Assembly to promote coordination between the secretariats of the two organizations and request the specialized agencies and other bodies and programmes of the United Nations to cooperate towards this end. In order to fully implement this resolution, a formal cooperation agreement between the secretariat of CPLP and the United Nations is being considered.

29. In February 2005, the Executive Secretary of CPLP visited United Nations Headquarters, where contacts with the Secretariat and the Economic and Social Council were established. The situation in Guinea-Bissau was among the issues discussed.

30. The Executive Secretary participated in the sixth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations. On that occasion, the statements of the Executive Secretary focused on the CPLP contribution to peacekeeping and international development. The Executive Secretary has also followed the preparation for the seventh high-level meeting and sent a participant to the first Standing Committee meeting, which took place in New York on 23 and 24 February 2006.

31. At the field level the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) works in close cooperation with CPLP, which has a representative in Guinea-Bissau, to elaborate common strategies to help stabilize the country.

32. Having established joint action priorities, UNESCO and CPLP have been meeting regularly. In this context, Portuguese Language Day was celebrated on 5 May 2006 for the first time. This is a celebration that clearly demonstrates the importance that both organizations attach to cultural diversity and multilingualism. In addition, CPLP participated through the International Portuguese Language Institute at the technical conference on multilingualism in Bamako, sponsored by UNESCO in May 2005.

33. In March 2006 a technical cooperation project between CPLP and FAO was signed, aimed at the elaboration of a regional capacity-building programme on territorial property, land management and legal aspects targeted specifically at CPLP member States.

34. On trade and development, cooperation with UNCTAD included technical training programmes on ports and the negotiation of international investment agreements. Difficulties encountered in this process stemmed from the lack of Portuguese-speaking instructors and training materials in Portuguese. In view of affirming the Portuguese language in international organizations, the possibility of placing young experts from CPLP member States in UNCTAD is being considered to establish a functional link between the two organizations.

35. Regarding the cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the CPLP Executive Secretariat and the Portuguese Government co-organized a conference on the fight against the exploitation of child labour in CPLP countries, in April 2006.

VI. Council of Europe

36. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe has been further strengthened through direct contacts between the secretariats of the two organizations and between the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system and the Council of Europe.

37. The Secretaries-General of the two organizations met on a number of occasions and discussed issues of mutual interest. The Council of Europe Secretary General addressed the United Nations 2005 World Summit. He also attended the inaugural meeting of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 19 June 2006.

38. In May 2005, the Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) visited the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe participates in the CTC Monitoring Team on-site evaluation visits to the Council of Europe member States, which began with a visit to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in early March 2006. The Council of Europe is also engaged in facilitating the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) among its member States.

39. In the area of conflict prevention, the two organizations held a first desk-to-desk meeting in June 2005 in New York on a number of issues of common concern. With respect to peacekeeping, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Council of Europe collaborate closely, in particular in the field of human rights protection. In August 2004, two agreements were concluded between UNMIK and the Council of Europe. The first agreement relates to the application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Kosovo, while the second aims at facilitating the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture to carry out visits to persons deprived of their liberty in Kosovo by decision of UNMIK. Within the framework of the negotiation process on the future status of Kosovo, the Council of Europe provides advice to the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo on a number of issues, including decentralization, human rights and the protection of cultural and religious sites.

40. The United Nations, together with the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, regularly hold high-level tripartite

meetings. The most recent tripartite meeting took place on 4 and 5 July 2006 in Geneva under the chairmanship of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

41. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continue to strengthen their cooperation with the Council of Europe. UNHCR organized from 5 to 7 July 2005 a regional consultation on Europe and Central Asia for a study of the Secretary-General on violence against children in Ljubljana. The two organizations also jointly organized the conference on the theme "Yokohama review for Europe and Central Asia".

42. On the protection of children, UNICEF and the Council of Europe maintain close cooperation on children's rights, education, HIV/AIDS, drugs and organized crime against children.

43. In the sphere of education, UNESCO and the Council of Europe signed a declaration of intent in October 2005 to establish an open platform of inter-institutional cooperation for intercultural dialogue.

44. The Council of Europe participated in the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee and other meetings of experts on bioethics. UNESCO also collaborates with the Council of Europe in the framework of the Independent International Commission for Cultural Heritage in Kosovo.

45. UNODC has actively contributed to the work of the Council of Europe in revising and updating Recommendation No. R (87) 21 on assistance to victims and the prevention of victimization. In addition, UNODC contributed to the elaboration of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 May 2005. Cooperation between UNODC and the Council, especially its Counter-Terrorism Unit, has continued. The Council of Europe joined UNODC in two workshops in Croatia (2004 and 2005) and one in Hungary (2003). The Zagreb Declaration on International Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism, Corruption and the Fight against Transnational Organized Crime was adopted in 2005.

VII. Economic Community of Central African States

46. The United Nations considers the reinforcement of its cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) as an important step towards strengthening the capacity of that subregional body to effectively promote peace as a prerequisite for development in Central Africa. The United Nations is therefore giving priority to the strengthening of ECCAS capacity for conflict prevention, early warning, electoral assistance and peacekeeping.

47. The United Nations and ECCAS have been engaged for over a decade in a constructive partnership in the critical areas of peace and security, human rights and institution-building. On 14 and 27 July 2003, ECCAS, with the assistance of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, organized a multinational military manoeuvre called "Biyongho 2003" in Gabon. A similar exercise, known as "Barh El-Gazel 2006", was initially scheduled to take place in Chad, in February 2006, but was postponed owing to the prevailing security situation in that country. One of the main objectives of these multinational

manoeuvres is to strengthen subregional capabilities in the domain of peacekeeping and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

48. The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa is the main framework at the ministerial level for discussions of subregional peace and security issues in Central Africa, in particular on arms limitation, disarmament and confidence-building measures. Its 22nd and 23rd meetings were both held at Brazzaville, from 14 to 18 March 2005 and from 29 August to 2 September 2005, respectively. The Department for Disarmament Affairs serves as the secretariat of the Committee and works closely with member States of the subregion and with the ECCAS secretariat in Libreville.

49. UNODC contributed to the drafting of the joint ECCAS and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, which was adopted in Nigeria in July 2006. A representative from ECCAS participated in the Madrid Ministerial Round Table of West and Central African Countries on Counter-Terrorism Legal Framework, held by UNODC on 25 and 26 May 2006.

50. With respect to food security, FAO is working with ECCAS in the formulation, resource mobilization and implementation of Regional Programmes for Food Security, which includes activities related to strengthening policy, trade, planning capacity, regional training courses in food safety, regulation in international trade and the preparation of commodity chain studies.

51. The ECCAS secretariat and the Yaounde-based United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa have continued their cooperation on a number of issues of common concern, including early warning and conflict prevention, and the role of civil society organizations in the consolidation of democracy and human rights in Central Africa. In this context, ECCAS has participated in several workshops organized by the Centre. The workshops focused on military justice, human rights and democracy, relations between civilians and the military, and the role of civil society in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Central Africa.

52. In the context of its cooperation with UNDP, ECCAS is currently benefiting from an assistance project that involves the implementation of the duty-free trade zone within the ECCAS community, implementation of decisions pertaining to the free movement of people in Central Africa, and an agreement for cooperation and judiciary assistance among ECCAS member States.

53. Through its subregional office for Central Africa, ECA continued to support the work of ECCAS during the period under review in the following ways:

(a) Strengthening the capacity of ECCAS in the harmonization of its programmes and activities in selected development sectors. A consultative body has been established for this purpose, with ECA as the secretariat;

(b) Implementation of the Central Africa Transport Master Plan to support trade development between and among countries of the subregion and foster economic integration. In that regard, ECA is financing a study on the prioritization of the projects contained in the Plan, and will support resource mobilization efforts for its implementation;

(c) Assistance to ECCAS member States on trade-related issues, including support in building a coherent strategy in the ongoing negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union;

(d) Development of a Central Africa e-strategy for promoting the use of information and communication technology in socio-economic activities and the development of the information society in the subregion.

VIII. League of Arab States

54. Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States continued through direct contact between the secretariats of the two organizations and between the specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States. The Secretaries-General of the two organizations held constructive meetings and exchanged formal communications on an array of issues.

55. The United Nations-League of Arab States consultations focused on the situation in the Middle East, Iraq, Somalia and the Sudan, and on conflict prevention and the fight against terrorism. In particular, the United Nations supported the process of the League of Arab States Conference on Iraqi National Accord. To that end, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq have been working closely with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and his representative in Baghdad. Similar cooperation took place in the months leading to the preparatory conference of the League of Arab States held in Cairo in November 2005.

56. A sectoral United Nations-League of Arab States meeting was also held in Cairo in November 2005 and a general meeting on cooperation between the two organizations took place in Vienna in April 2006. The sectoral meeting focused on the issue of the implementation and financing of the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development in the Arab region and a review of joint projects. The general meeting assessed activities that had been carried out since 2004 in the economic and social fields. The United Nations and the League of Arab States exchanged information and views regarding their efforts in conflict prevention and resolution. The League of Arab States expressed interest in benefiting from the United Nations expertise in the areas of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution, and in participating in seminars organized by the United Nations in this regard. The participants agreed on the importance of creating effective mechanisms to follow up the decisions and recommendations of the general and sectoral meetings.

57. The United Nations programmes and agencies carried out various activities with their counterparts in the League of Arab States system of institutions. In 2004 and 2005, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the League of Arab States continued to build on the outcome of joint projects in the areas of data collection, analysis, advocacy and population policy review. UNFPA and the League of Arab States joined efforts with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to organize the Regional Arab Population Forum in November 2004. The Pan Arab Project of Family Health Survey grew into an established regional reference centre providing credible detailed and in-depth information on the health, social and environmental status of the Arab family. In 2005, UNFPA collaborated closely with the newly restructured Population and Policy Division of the League of Arab States on the implementation of a regional project on the theme

"Empowerment and participation of young people in population and development strategies in the Arab region"

58. The UNEP Regional Office for West Asia has been providing support in the field of environment and sustainable development to the League of Arab States through the technical secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE). The primary tool for UNEP support to the League of Arab States at present is the sustainable development initiative for the Arab region, which was developed by CAMRE, UNEP and ESCWA.

59. ESCWA has cooperated with the League of Arab States and its organizations and institutions in the following areas: population policies, environment and sustainable development, agriculture and water, family health and communication, transport, trade, human settlements and the fight against poverty. Together with UNFPA and the League of Arab States, ESCWA organized the Regional Arab Population Forum in Beirut from 19 to 21 November 2004. ESCWA took the lead for the preparation of a comprehensive study on the theme "Energy for sustainable development: a framework for action", which was adopted by the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region. In cooperation with the League of Arab States, the Ministry of Housing of Egypt, UN-Habitat and the Arab Towns Organization, ESCWA organized the high-level Arab meeting on sustainable Arab cities, security of tenure and good urban governance (Cairo, 2005). The meeting was held in fulfilment of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the Millennium Development Goals.

60. Under the auspices of the League of Arab States and with assistance from UNDP and UNAIDS, Arab religious leaders responded to HIV/AIDS by signing the Cairo Declaration in December 2004. UNAIDS continues to work with the League of Arab States in implementing the Declaration. The League of Arab States ministerial conference (Cairo, December 2005) adopted the principles of UN-Habitat Global Campaigns and committed to streamline their development strategies with the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, as well as the Millennium Development Goals. In December 2005, UNESCO, in cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and the World Islamic Call Society, organized an international conference on the introduction of the history of science in higher education in Muslim countries and a symposium on the popularization of the history of science (March 2006).

IX. Organization of the Islamic Conference

61. Regular consultations have continued between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) officials at different levels on important economic, political, social and humanitarian matters. An increasing number of opportunities for cooperation have led to advancements in the level of coordination between OIC and the United Nations, particularly in the areas of human rights, the developmental capacity of States, and conflict resolution in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

62. The general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and OIC and its specialized institutions

was held in July 2006 in Rabat. The meeting offered the opportunity to explore new areas of cooperation. It also reviewed the projects and joint activities undertaken since the 2004 general meeting in areas such as science and technology, trade and development, the protection of and assistance to refugees, food security and agriculture, human resources development, environment, health and population, arts and crafts, and the promotion of heritage. A memorandum of understanding on technical cooperation in the field of human rights between OHCHR and OIC was signed at the Rabat meeting.

63. OIC has recently embarked on a new programme to expand the scope of its mission and to strengthen its overall work, particularly in the areas of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation and the continued modernization of its subsidiary organs. This programme is in line with the introduction of practical reforms outlined in its 10-year programme of action to meet the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah in the twenty-first century, which was adopted at the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference held in Mecca in December 2005.

64. In February 2006, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, OIC and the League of Arab States, together with the representatives of Qatar, Spain and Turkey, issued a joint statement appealing for restraint and calm after the controversial publication of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. The statement contained a commitment to formulate a joint strategy and agreed measures that would help overcome the crisis, prevent its recurrence and promote tolerance and mutual respect between all religions and communities in Europe and elsewhere.

65. The United Nations and OIC organizations and specialized institutions continued close and multifaceted cooperation with a view to strengthening the capacities of the two organizations in addressing challenges to development and social progress. UNDP and OIC held detailed discussions regarding the effective implementation of the various provisions of the OIC 10-year programme of action in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. ESCWA, FAO and UNFPA cooperated with the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries in organizing seminars, workshops and expert group meetings.

66. In a sign of progressing collaboration, OIC, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and UNICEF co-organized the First Ministerial Conference on the Child in Rabat in November 2005. UNESCO, the International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization held a joint meeting in Rabat in June 2005 on the theme "Fostering dialogue among cultures and civilizations through concrete and sustained action".

67. The United Nations has continued to cooperate with the Islamic Development Bank and ISESCO either directly or via their regional offices and centres. In response to critical situations brought about by conflict or natural disaster, OIC and the United Nations have effectively coordinated their resources in the area of humanitarian assistance. The increased role of OIC in humanitarian work, especially in response to the 2004 tsunami disaster and to a series of devastating earthquakes in Asia, has complemented the work of the United Nations disaster-relief efforts in those areas. In May 2006, the two organizations worked together to help alleviate famine in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. Furthermore, continued OIC funding of reconstruction projects in parts of Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Bosnia has strengthened the work of the United Nations in those countries. In September 2005,

the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) signed a memorandum of understanding with OIC.

X. Organization of American States

68. The Regional Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the Americas promoted and consolidated social dialogue, particularly in the Andean region. Its efforts aimed at improving relations between ILO constituents and preventing social unrest. National labour councils have been established in Brazil, Ecuador and Peru. In the framework of its decent work hemispheric agenda, ILO sensitized the region on labour issues and gave attention to mechanisms for conflict prevention, consultation and consensus-building, job creation, combating poverty and democratic governance. In cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS), it organized training and provided technical assistance, promoting human rights and the application of international labour standards.

69. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC), in cooperation with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), Interpol and the University of Peace, organized law enforcement training on the control of the legal firearms trade and prevention of illicit trafficking in Brazil and Paraguay. Twelve new training courses are under preparation. UN-LiREC maintained the joint United Nations-OAS small arms and light weapons administrations system and developed, with CICAD and others, the integrated weapons management system to register firearms, ammunition and explosives, and manage weapons facilities.

70. UNODC has cooperated with OAS through CICAD in four main areas: implementing national database systems, decentralizing drug control master plans, supporting national observatories on drugs in the Andean region and organizing law enforcement training on firearms control, money-laundering investigations and the prevention of illicit trafficking. UNODC and CICAD intend to jointly fund new studies on comparable data on drug abuse. UNODC also has established a permanent operational partnership with the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism and provides technical assistance on counter-terrorism issues to Latin American and Caribbean countries. UNODC and OAS jointly organized a number of ministerial conferences, workshops, specialized training seminars and technical assistance missions.

71. Cooperation has also been sustained in the spheres of economy and trade. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and OAS have furthered their institutional ties by coordinating on trade-related capacity-building, statistics gathering, regional economic integration, economic, social and sustainable development, information society, port infrastructure and maritime transport. Both ECLAC and OAS continue to provide important institutional and technical support for the implementation of mandates resulting from the Summit of the Americas process.

72. UNEP collaborates with OAS in implementing Global Environment Facility projects, in particular on water-related issues, and will support the follow-up process to the Santa Cruz summit. UNEP also participates in the water policy dialogue for the Americas.

XI. International Organization of la Francophonie

73. The International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) continued to strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations in 2005. The OIF Secretary-General took part in the dialogue of Heads of State and Government of la Francophonie, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in conjunction with the World Summit in September 2005, on "Democracy, rights and freedoms in francophone communities", with the attendance of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. OIF reiterated its commitment to strengthening partnerships with the United Nations at the Bamako symposium from 6 to 8 November 2005, which was attended by a representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

74. Several joint meetings were held in New York aimed at increasing the contribution of francophone countries to peacekeeping operations. A joint working group of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the missions of the francophone countries was created in March 2006 to initiate a dialogue between DPKO and OIF with a view to improving participation by Francophonie member States and observers in issues related to peacekeeping operations and promoting the use of the French language in peacekeeping operations taking place in francophone communities. As its contribution to this effort, OIF sent a group of francophone experts in May-June 2006 to participate in DPKO's pilot project for the training and recruitment of police officers for United Nations peacekeeping operations in Dakar and Yaoundé.

75. With regard to crisis and conflict prevention as well as warning capacities, OIF, following the joint United Nations-OIF workshop on early warning and conflict prevention held in April 2004, took part in the sixth high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations held in New York on 25 and 26 July, which laid the foundation for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of conflict prevention. The participants in the sixth high-level meeting established a standing committee to act as a link between high-level plenary meetings. The standing committee held its first meeting on 23 and 24 February 2006 in New York. A francophone ministerial conference on conflict prevention and human security was held in May 2006 in Saint Boniface, Canada, in keeping with the recommendation of the United Nations General Assembly to discuss in detail the concept of human security.

76. OIF also strengthened its cooperation with the United Nations in the field of electoral observation and assistance. In that regard, OIF was involved in the review of a draft text on harmonizing the electoral observation rules and practices of international organizations adopted by the United Nations on 27 October 2005. OIF also collaborated with the United Nations on various electoral timetables in French-speaking areas, particularly in Haiti where it worked in close cooperation with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) during its observation mission to monitor the first round of presidential, legislative and senatorial elections on 7 February 2006 and its support and information mission during the second legislative and the senatorial elections on 21 April 2006.

77. In Côte d'Ivoire, OIF collaborated with the United Nations on a joint mission to analyse and evaluate needs for the elections originally scheduled for October 2005. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, OIF participated in the management of the presidential and legislative elections of July 2006 by making

available experts and by training Congolese judges in the area of electoral disputes as part of a partnership agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A francophone observer mission was deployed during the election with the logistical support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and in collaboration with MONUC's electoral support project (Projet d'appui au processus électoral en Republique democratique du Congo). From 29 May to 6 June 2006, OIF, in partnership with the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), sent a mission to Bangui to collect information and evaluate the situation after the establishment of the institutions provided for in the Constitution.

78. OIF provided technical assistance to the member countries of la Francophonie in the preparation of their reports to the Counter-Terrorism Committee. OIF also collaborates with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Terrorism Prevention Branch.

79. OIF was also involved in the process of establishing the Human Rights Council and organized a francophone information and exchange seminar on the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 25 and 26 November 2005. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights attended the meeting of the Bureau du Comité de Suivi de la Conférence des Structures Gouvernementales Chargées des droits de l'Homme dans l'Espace Francophone (bureau of the follow-up committee on the Conference of Governmental Human Rights Structures in the Francophone Community) held on 3 and 4 February 2005.

80. OIF, in collaboration with UNDP, held a seminar from 9 to 11 September 2005 on the "Millennium Development Goals: Prospects for the Francophone Community". With regard to the work carried out by OIF in the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed the director of the Institut francophone des nouvelles technologies de l'information (Francophone Institute for New Information and Training Technologies) to the Strategy Council of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development. It should be noted that each year the permanent mission of OIF in New York receives a delegation from the Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la Francophonie (Energy and Environment Institute of the Francophone community) during the session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

81. The United Nations and OIF also cooperated in the areas of youth and the improvement of the status of women. The two organizations collaborated in the implementation of joint mechanisms for consulting with youths as part of the evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Youth in 2005. They also cooperated in the development of a common set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating the development of youth. OIF also participated in the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and presented the francophone community's contribution to the 10-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

XII. Pacific Islands Forum

82. The United Nations partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum has continued to grow. The development and implementation of the Pacific Plan for strengthening regional cooperation and integration has provided an effective framework for

focusing and coordinating the United Nations policy and programme support in the region. In the context of the Pacific Plan, the United Nations has partnered with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat and other regional intergovernmental agencies of the Pacific to deliver a wide range of activities across the four pillars of the Plan, namely, economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security.

83. A major benchmark has been achieved in the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement in Papua New Guinea. In May 2005, the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) declared the weapons disposal programme complete and verified the situation as being conducive to holding elections. As a result, the first general elections for the President and Members of the House of Representatives of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville held from 20 May through 15 June 2005 led to the establishment of the first Autonomous Bougainville Government. The Department of Political Affairs, the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat and UNOMB worked closely on designing the concept of international election observation and its coordination. Good cooperation was also maintained between the Department of Political Affairs, UNDP and the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat in preparation for and during the election in Solomon Islands in April 2006. The Department of Political Affairs will continue to provide election observation assistance to the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat. Meanwhile, the Department of Political Affairs, UNDP and the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat are developing joint project proposals that will complement the activities of Solomon Islands' Government and the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands aimed at tackling the challenges ahead.

84. In 2005, UNDP assisted with the design and development of the monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Pacific Plan. The strategy will aim to ensure close correlation with the Millennium Development Goals and other international instruments and will assist in the design of a web-based system for donor reporting on activities implemented in accordance with the Plan objectives. UNDP has continued to focus on strengthening the capacity of Governments in the region to respond to the significant development challenges faced by the small and vulnerable economies. At the same time, specific attention was paid to addressing poverty and marginalization and ensuring the protection of human rights.

85. In April 2005, the Department of Political Affairs and UNDP, in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat, collaborated and held the first joint regional workshop on peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Nadi, Fiji. The workshop took stock of the available capacities at the local, national and regional levels and came up with recommendations on how to strengthen partnership in this field. Another regional workshop on gender, conflict, peace and security was held in June 2006 at the initiative of the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat and several organizations, including UNDP, the Australian Agency for International Development and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The workshop was aimed at building capacity to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. UNDP and the University of the South Pacific are collaborating on a leadership programme that will groom future Pacific leaders to espouse principles of good governance. UNDP, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and UN-Habitat conducted regional training of trainers for local elected leaders in March and April 2006, and UNDP plans to conduct an awareness-raising workshop on public ethics and accountability in August 2006.

86. UNODC is undertaking a peer review of the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat model counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime legislation. OHCHR is assessing the Forum member countries' low compliance rates regarding human rights conventions with a view to working out appropriate remedial measures. The Forum secretariat, in collaboration with UNIFEM, has commissioned regional research on barriers to the election of women to parliaments and organized a regional workshop on advancing women's representation in Parliament in the Cook Islands, in April 2006.

87. FAO mobilized funds for the Pacific Islands Forum in support of the Regional Programme for Food Security. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) continued to work closely with national meteorological and hydrological services of the Pacific Islands Forum member States in the areas of weather, water and climate, and other related environmental issues. UNAIDS, through its Asia Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development, assisted the Pacific Islands Forum to develop the Pacific regional strategy implementation plan. The plan was endorsed at the Pacific Islands Forum summit held in Papua New Guinea in October 2005. Recognizing its role in developing the plan, the Asia Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development has been asked to take the lead in supporting the implementation of the plan.

88. UNESCO has worked closely with Solomon Islands on the implementation of the programme on the theme "Developing media in conflict areas". It was also instrumental in the development of the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education, which was managed by the Forum and implemented by the University of the South Pacific. At the request of the Pacific Ministers of Trade and Commerce, UNESCO, in collaboration with the South Pacific Community and the Forum secretariat, completed the draft subregional law for the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture.

89. On 10 April 2006, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat held in Jakarta for the first time the Pacific Leaders' United Nations-ESCAP Special Session, which allowed many Pacific leaders to highlight their development needs in the context of the Pacific Plan. As follow-up to its resolutions 62/9 and 62/12, ESCAP, in active collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat and UNDP, has initiated a project on the theme "Enhancing Pacific connectivity". The project is to undertake an in-depth study on information and communication technology applications, including satellite infrastructure in the Pacific. ESCAP is also working with the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat to assess the adjustment costs that Pacific countries would have to bear as a result of providing greater market access to the European Union members as part of the Economic Partnership Agreement.

XIII. Southern African Development Community

90. Cooperation between the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the United Nations system has continued to deepen, especially in the area of technical assistance.

91. ECA has continued its close collaboration with SADC through its subregional office for Southern Africa. The main areas of cooperation have included the development of policy frameworks for transport, information and communication

technology, mining, energy, gender, labour, agriculture and HIV/AIDS. Ongoing consultations to strengthen and consolidate ECA partnership with SADC are expected to result in the signing of a cooperation agreement covering regional integration, capacity-building and human resources development and resource mobilization for regional multisectoral projects and programmes.

92. FAO has collaborated with SADC in the area of food security, particularly in the formulation, resource mobilization and implementation of the Regional Programme for Food Security, including activities related to the strengthening of policy, trade and planning capacity. Two FAO food security projects were completed during the reporting period: the Seed Security Network and a capacity-building project to support a SADC remote sensing unit aimed at early warning for food security. Assistance was also provided for agricultural water management (the river basin approach, covering six countries) and for collaboration with SADC in harmonizing their agricultural and trade policies, including support in developing common markets for food products.

93. UNAIDS assisted in brokering a five-year joint financing and technical cooperation arrangement for the SADC HIV/AIDS Unit. The International Cooperating Partners on HIV/AIDS would provide core financial assistance through this arrangement to enable SADC to implement its HIV/AIDS strategic framework and business plan. It would also enable the SADC secretariat to deal more effectively with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the long term. A meeting organized by the SADC secretariat, assisted by UNAIDS, analysed the evidence on the drivers of the epidemic in the subregion, focusing specifically on sexual transmission of HIV. The meeting concluded with a number of key recommendations for national AIDS councils, the SADC secretariat and the International Cooperating Partners. The United Nations is currently revising its workplan on HIV prevention, taking into consideration the recommendations made.

94. In line with the Maseru Plan of Action of 2000, when SADC trade ministers mandated the initiation of the negotiations on trade in services at the regional level, UNCTAD supported the establishment of a project financed by the European Community that would support member States and the secretariat of SADC in the services negotiations. The first regional workshop was held in Cape Town, South Africa, in September 2005, under the auspices of the SADC Trade Negotiations Forum on Trade in Services, and played an important role in kick-starting the project activities. This was followed by a meeting of SADC senior officials and a SADC ministers' meeting to prepare for the sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference. The meetings enabled SADC member States to craft recommendations for the sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, and the SADC Ministers of Trade to adopt a communiqué.

95. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre has been working with SADC member countries for the preservation of rock art under the Southern African Rock Art Project. One site has been inscribed in Botswana and others are under preparation in Malawi and South Africa.

96. UNFPA has been providing support in developing a subregional strategy on reproductive health and in the development of a strategy for mainstreaming population into SADC policies and programmes.

97. In the fight against terrorism, UNODC has entered into formal discussions with SADC in an effort to enhance collaboration on counter-terrorism in the SADC region. Several joint activities with SADC have been initiated, including a subregional workshop for senior criminal justice officials focusing on the legal aspects of counter-terrorism and related international cooperation in criminal matters, a ministerial conference on the ratification and implementation of the universal legal instruments against terrorism, and a series of national bilateral technical assistance and training activities. UNODC is supporting efforts to strengthen the capacity of SADC member States to ratify and implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. This initiative supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Trafficking in Persons Protocol).

98. Over the past five years the World Food Programme (WFP) has provided technical assistance to national vulnerability assessment committees, which consists of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, government departments and the private sector. WFP staff members have been providing extensive assistance to national vulnerability assessment committees in terms of capacity-building and guidance on vulnerability assessment and analysis in the region. National vulnerability assessment committees are active in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and are in the process of being formalized in Angola, Namibia and South Africa. The SADC Integrated Committee of Ministers approved in 2005 a five-year programme to improve regional and national policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions through the strengthening of national and regional vulnerability assessment and analysis systems. This would occur at three levels: SADC member States, the secretariat and International Cooperating Partners. WFP was the lead agency for the procurement of funds from the South African Government, and managed the funds for the SADC regional vulnerability assessment committee.

99. WMO continued to collaborate with SADC in the development and upgrading of infrastructure and facilities of hydrometeorological services in the region and in capacity-building to ensure an effective contribution to socio-economic development. In this regard, WMO provided several SADC member States with technical assistance from its regular budget, trust fund projects, voluntary cooperation programme and other sources. It also continued to support the SADC Drought Monitoring Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe, in its efforts to provide relevant weather/climate products and early warning advisories. With the support of WMO, the Drought Monitoring Centre organized several training workshops.

Part Two
Cooperation between the United Nations and organizations in the economic field

XIV. Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

A. Economic Commission for Europe

1. Cooperation between the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) has continued in accordance with the cooperative agreement between the two organizations, signed in Istanbul on 2 July 2001. It has been most fruitful in the fields of transport and trade. Within the framework of the established BSEC Project Development Fund, the possibilities of developing joint activities of mutual interest are being explored.

2. In the field of transport, ECE assisted in the process of harmonization of national transport legislation of the BSEC member States on the basis of their accession to and implementation of the main ECE legal instruments on transport. ECE contributed to the coordinated development of transport infrastructure in the BSEC region through the elaboration of the ECE Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects Master Plan. In particular, the TEM and TER Master Plan identified the backbone road and rail networks, evaluated and prioritized a large number of transport infrastructure projects in 21 Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, nine of which are BSEC member countries, and elaborated a realistic investment strategy to gradually develop those networks. ECE has also assisted in the development of Euro-Asian transport links, including through the BSEC Region. In close cooperation with the BSEC Transport Working Group, a large number of data on major Black Sea and Mediterranean ports of Euro-Asian importance were collected and processed, which served as an input to the further development of the ECE-Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific joint Euro-Asian transport links project.

3. In the field of trade, negotiations between ECE and BSEC are under way on the development of a trade facilitation strategy for BSEC. The possibilities of developing joint activities in the harmonization of trade and transport documents according to international standards, as well as harmonization of data requirements, in compliance with the United Nations code lists, are being explored.

4. ECE has participated in the semi-annual meetings of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the meetings of Ministers of Transport of BSEC member States. The Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of BSEC participated in the most recent annual sessions of ECE. Possibilities for expanding cooperation with BSEC associated institutions, in particular the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, are being explored.

B. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

5. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) cooperated with BSEC in implementing projects of common interest. Work is under way on the preparation of a cooperative agreement in the form of a memorandum of understanding between

BSEC and FAO. The two parties have agreed on all principal issues, and currently FAO experts are working on the final version of the memorandum of understanding in order to be presented to BSEC for adoption and signature.

C. World Trade Organization

6. The Permanent International Secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and the World Trade Organization jointly organized a regional workshop on the technical barriers in trade agreement for Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, which was held in Istanbul on 23 and 24 September 2004. Experts from the International Standardization Organization and the Codex Alimentarius Commission of FAO attended the workshop.

D. World Bank

7. As an outcome of the process of establishing a formal agreement on cooperation between the two organizations, which was initiated following consultations in 2003, the relevant process was concluded with the signing of the joint letter entitled "BSEC-World Bank Cooperation: Framework and Structure" in January 2005, leading to the establishment of a formal framework of cooperation. The Permanent International Secretariat of BSEC and the Office of the World Bank Special Representative for South-East Europe in Brussels will coordinate the agreed cooperation. The guiding principles of such enhanced cooperation between BSEC and the World Bank Europe and Central Asia region division, are: (a) meetings and information sharing; (b) strategic collaboration; and (c) areas of cooperation.

8. The twelfth meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Komotini, 23 April 2005) emphasized the necessity of undertaking further practical steps towards closer cooperation between the two organizations in project implementation in the BSEC region.

9. The Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of BSEC sent a letter to the World Bank Europe and Central Asia region division asking for support for the BSEC Project Development Fund-financed project on the theme "Development of distant learning software for the international road transportation industry".

10. The Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of BSEC held consultations in Washington, D.C. (15-16 July 2005) with World Bank Regional Vice President Shigeo Katsu and other World Bank executives on different areas of mutual interest.

E. World Tourism Organization

11. The relationship between BSEC and the World Tourism Organization is progressing. Following the relevant activities of the World Tourism Organization Committee on Sustainable Development of Tourism, and taking into account the ongoing developments in the field of sustainable development of tourism in the Black Sea region and beyond, the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, at its meeting, on 29 and 30 March 2005, agreed to include this issue in the agenda of the Working Group meetings, in the future.

12. Furthermore, the regional representative for Europe of the World Tourism Organization participated in the BSEC Working Group meeting on cooperation in tourism and in the meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Tourism held on 31 March 2005.

13. The Permanent International Secretariat of BSEC continued to develop cooperation with the Bogazici University World Tourism Organization Education and Training Centre in Istanbul to promote education and training programmes as important tools to achieve quality and efficiency in tourism.

F. Conclusion and recommendations

14. **The Secretary-General has taken further steps towards the implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/259 in respect of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, including strengthening dialogue with that organization and promoting cooperation and coordination between the two secretariats and between the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and BSEC, on joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest to both organizations.**

15. **The United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should continue to cooperate and hold consultations with BSEC, and formulate and implement joint programmes pertaining to fields of common interest, including the implementation of the aforementioned cooperative agreements.**

XV. Economic Cooperation Organization

A. Background

16. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/4 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). In that resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution. The report provides a brief résumé of the status of the cooperative relationship between ECO and various United Nations organizations.

B. Status of the cooperative relationship between the Economic Cooperation Organization and various United Nations organizations

United Nations Development Programme

17. During the mission of the ECO Secretary General to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in June 2005, he was briefed by the Country Director of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Afghanistan on the agreement signed between the Government of Afghanistan and UNDP on the promotion of regional supply of goods, services and expertise for reconstruction of Afghanistan.

18. The ECO secretariat is exploring a cooperation framework for possible contribution of the ECO secretariat to enhance the content and coverage of the

current publication of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Economic Commission for Europe

19. Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 2003, both organizations have agreed to cooperate in the areas of trade, transport, industry and entrepreneurship, sustainable energy development, economics and statistics, and the protection of the environment. Although no direct cooperation has taken place between the two organizations during the reporting period, ECE has undertaken a number of projects in a number of ECO member countries.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

20. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) continued to provide assistance to ECO member States in their efforts towards reducing poverty. In that regard, ESCAP began the implementation of a project on strengthening income and employment generation for vulnerable groups with funding support from the Government of Japan. Activities under the project were undertaken in 2005 and 2006 with a view to compiling and evaluating the existing income and employment generation programmes in the Central Asian countries, which are member countries of ECO (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). It is expected that, after the conclusion of the project, the participating countries would have in place a framework for promoting, evaluating and monitoring self-employment policies and programmes for poverty reduction.

21. The ECO secretariat, at the request of ESCAP and in line with the existing memorandum of understanding between the two organizations, cooperated with ESCAP in the preparation of a report on the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific 2005, by covering the subregion of Central Asia, as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey. The report provides a rich source of data on the state of the environment in the ECO region.

22. ESCAP and ECO have formulated the terms of reference of the Working Group on Energy Trade and Power Interconnection, the establishment of which was agreed at the tenth consultative meeting of the executive heads of subregional organizations and ESCAP, held at Kathmandu, in September 2005.

23. In June 2005, ESCAP shared its experience in promoting energy cooperation at a meeting on regional energy trade in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

24. In April 2005, ESCAP organized at Tehran, a seminar on trade policy; multilateral, regional and bilateral trade agreements and negotiations; trade facilitation; and "best practice" in accession to the World Trade Organization; and assisted in a trade and investment policy and strategy brainstorming session with the ECO Deputy Secretary General and his team responsible for trade and investment.

25. ESCAP has maintained close collaboration with ECO in the field of transport particularly in relation to the development of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, and facilitation of land transport.

26. The project on identifying investment needs and development priorities for the Asian Highway network and related intermodal connections and freight terminals involved the preparation of subregional overviews for Central and North Asia,[2] South and West Asia and South-East Asia, and the convening of three subregional expert group meetings. The subregional expert group meeting for North, Central and South-West Asia was organized in collaboration with ECO in Tehran in January 2005.

27. In June 2005, a high-level expert meeting on the ECO Road Network Map was held in the ECO secretariat, at Tehran. During the meeting, it was agreed that ESCAP road standards and classifications should be taken as a basis for the ECO Road Network Map since all the ECO member countries are members of ESCAP.

28. ESCAP, ECE and ECO continued to cooperate under the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia in the field of transport, entailing the active participation of ECO in the Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing, including its eleventh session held in March 2006 at Almaty, Kazakhstan.

29. Within the framework of the United Nations Development Account Project on capacity-building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages, it is expected that the involvement of ECO will be further expanded in the project implementation.

30. ESCAP has also initiated discussions with ECO on enhancing collaboration in the organization of demonstration run of container block trains to and between ECO member countries.

31. ESCAP has launched the following projects, which envisage collaboration with ECO:

(a) Project on regional intermodal transport planning (phases I and II), which focuses on developing an integrated transport planning model by expanding the ESCAP-developed Maritime Policy Planning Model to include intermodal aspects, and thereby contribute to the improvement of transport and logistics infrastructure and the efficiency of intermodal transport operations with particular attention to intermodal linkages with landlocked and transit developing countries in the region;

(b) Promoting the role of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway: intermodal interfaces as focus for development, which aims to promote the role of transport as a prime vector of economic and social development by improving facilities and operational practices at intermodal interfaces, including border-crossing points and thus enhancing the operational efficiency of the road and rail linkages of international importance forming the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks jointly defined by UNCTAD and its member countries.

32. A training workshop on the theme "Participatory project design based on the Logical Framework Approach" was jointly organized by ECO and ESCAP at the ECO secretariat in Tehran, in April 2005. Training was given on results-based management and the Logical Framework Approach, with reference to the Millennium Development Goals, environment and sustainable development and trade policy.

[2] Activities in Central Asia are closely correlated with those being undertaken in that subregion under the project on capacity-building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

33. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) initiated, jointly with ESCAP, a project covering both multimodal transport and trade facilitation issues for the ECO member countries. This project is being implemented within the framework of an initiative to strengthen cooperation between ECO and UNCTAD in building capacity in the area of trade efficiency and cooperation. The Islamic Development Bank is financing the trade facilitation component.

34. Joint ECO/Islamic Development Bank/ESCAP/UNCTAD execution continued in 2005 with:

(a) Completion and review of four national country studies on multimodal transport issues prepared by ECO-recruited national consultants;

(b) Preparation of a consolidated report by an UNCTAD international consultant reflecting major findings of the national consultants reports and providing a number of relevant recommendations for the ECO member States in the area of multimodal transport;

(c) Holding of the second workshop on the theme "Multimodal transport and trade facilitation in the ECO region: measuring trade and transport facilitation instruments for development", in Tehran in May 2006. This workshop builds upon the recommendations of the first workshop on trade facilitation held in 2004 under the project in Tehran.

35. The ECO secretariat is expected to circulate these studies, reports and the outcome of the workshop documents to the concerned institutions of the ECO member States and stakeholders in their original language for their comments and possible action.

36. It is expected that the workshop will facilitate discussions on the preparation of a proposed plan of action to assist ECO member States to overcome physical and non-physical impediments in their regional and international trade. Also, it is expected that the workshop will identify a number of possible options and ways in which UNCTAD and ECO member countries could cooperate in joint efforts towards moving forward the trade and transport facilitation agenda in the region.

International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

37. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) and ECO continue their consultations on the promotion of ECO intraregional and external trade expansion. ITC attended the ministerial meeting in Astana in late September 2005 and remains in close contact with the ECO secretariat.

38. Among the lessons learned of the ITC-ECO cooperation project in the period 2001-2004 was the importance of increasing private sector interaction in the region by providing focused opportunities for enterprises to interact on a business-to-business level. In the process, barriers to trade and solutions to remove such barriers would have to be identified, in consultation with the business community, and the policy framework strengthened.

39. As a follow-up of the successes achieved, a second phase is now proposed for a three-year period, beginning in the second half of 2006. With the objective to help trade policy formulation at the level of ECO and its member States, it would first

reassess trade potentials within ECO and other countries, engaging the ECO secretariat and national institutions in the process, and strengthen the capacity of the ECO secretariat and member States to address trade strategy issues and support trade promotion. In this context, the information exchange between the private sector and the Governments would be facilitated. The project would also review the trade promotion organizations in the ECO region, suggesting common measures for improved effectiveness and efficiency, and create conditions for the establishment of a trade information network.

40. Starting on this basis, from 2007 onwards, the project would then directly address trade development needs of the private sector and its organizations. To this end, it would aim to enable, as appropriate, the ECO secretariat, the ECO Chamber of Commerce and private sector organizations in the region to successfully undertake supply and demand surveys and organize buyers and sellers meetings, assist enterprises in deriving the maximum benefit of their participation and strengthen the local ability to provide trade development services at large.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

41. A technical cooperation programme amounting to $327,000 has been implemented with financial and technical assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The FAO Regional Office for the Near East, in cooperation with the ECO secretariat and focal points in ECO member countries, prepared the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security. The Programme has 11 regional projects and several national projects.

42. The FAO-ECO technical cooperation programme for strengthening seed supply for the ECO region was signed on 22 February 2006. The project, with an outlay of $365,000, will be launched in May 2006 with the first meeting of focal points. The ECO secretariat also agreed to allocate $40,000 to this project from its Feasibility Fund.

United Nations Population Fund

43. In early 2005, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) attended the heads of State summit of ECO member States in Dushanbe.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

44. A drug coordination control unit was established at the ECO secretariat with the technical and financial assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Japan and the European Union (EU). Financial assistance of $800,000 was obtained from the donor countries like Japan and EU through UNODC. Phase I and phase II of the project have been completed, and now the ECO secretariat and UNODC have jointly prepared a draft project idea on the theme "Empowerment and drug and crime control measures and promotion of regional and international cooperation in the ECO framework". The project idea document, following approval of the ECO secretariat, was sent to UNODC in Vienna for approval and international financial assistance.

United Nations Industrial Development Programme

45. The ECO secretariat has submitted a draft project proposal on the theme "Strengthening of capacity for investment promotion agencies of ECO members" to

the United Nations Industrial Development Programme (UNIDO) Office in Tehran for funding under the UNIDO Trust Fund. This draft project is under active consideration by UNIDO.

46. The ECO secretariat staff and UNIDO Tehran branch office held a meeting in February 2006 reflecting on future cooperation between the two organizations, particularly in the field of transfer of technology, standardization and preparation of feasibility studies.

United Nations Environment Programme

47. A memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ECO was signed by the two organizations in August 2004. The proposed activities and programme of collaboration include the following:

(a) Enhancing environmentally sound and renewable energy services and resources. While Governments in the region are interested in tapping their renewable energy resources, no specific project or programme of action has been undertaken for want of extrabudgetary resources. Conducting resource assessments would be a logical first step;

(b) Capacity-building services in the areas of: environmental law, environmental education (subject to availability of resources) and eco-tourism;

(c) Environmental assessment services;

(d) UNEP continued participation in the ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment.

World Meteorological Organization

48. A memorandum of understanding between the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and ECO was signed by the two organizations in December 2004. The WMO representative participated at the second ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment held in October 2004.

C. Conclusion and recommendations

49. **It is recommended that the various specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and relevant international financial institutions consolidate their efforts to extend technical and financial assistance towards the implementation of the economic programmes and projects of ECO.**

Part Three
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/19 of 8 November 2004, in which the Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-first session on various aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

2. The report details the growing cooperation between the two world organizations in bringing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations, including in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development, humanitarian affairs and crisis management, international law and human rights, democracy and gender issues.

3. The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments, held at United Nations Headquarters in September 2005, was an important step in the reinforcement of the relationship between the United Nations and IPU. The letter and the spirit of the Declaration adopted by the Speakers of Parliaments was subsequently reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which called for "strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with a view to furthering all aspects of the Millennium Declaration in all fields of the work of the United Nations and ensuring the effective implementation of United Nations reform".

4. The report also addresses the institutional efforts aimed at strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and IPU, as called for in General Assembly resolution 59/19.

II. Overall support by parliaments to the United Nations

5. During IPU Statutory Assemblies in 2005 and 2006, the IPU member parliaments systematically addressed global issues that were also high on the United Nations agenda and adopted resolutions aimed at enhancing parliamentary action in support of major United Nations processes. These resolutions cover a variety of issues including migration, development, strengthening the control of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, environmental management and combating global degradation of the environment, innovative forms of financing for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as well as ensuring human rights in strategies to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The resolutions were subsequently circulated in the General Assembly, in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 57/47 of 21 November 2002.

6. Guided by the decisions of the 2005 World Summit and the objective to build momentum for meaningful United Nations reform, IPU brought together a high-level parliamentary delegation in New York in June 2006 for discussions with senior United Nations officials and leaders of regional groups on the question of United

Nations reform. The findings of the mission, which included a series of proposals for parliamentary action in support of a more effective and representative multilateral system with the United Nations at its core, were subsequently submitted to the leadership of all national parliaments.

7. During the period under review, IPU closely followed the deliberations of the United Nations working group on revitalization of the General Assembly, and presented a series of proposals on how to further improve cooperation between the two bodies to generate greater synergies and enhance the overall political impact of the General Assembly.

8. Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Democracy Fund, all of which are founded on the premise that investing in viable and effective representative institutions is indispensable to sustainable peace and development, IPU has taken steps towards developing a strong working relationship with these institutions.

III. Contribution of parliaments to major United Nations events

Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments at the 2005 World Summit

9. The Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments was held in the General Assembly Hall from 7 to 9 September 2005. The Conference, which took place back to back with the 2005 World Summit, was attended by the leaders of some 150 national parliaments and hundreds of parliamentarians and reinforced the growing relationship between IPU and the United Nations. The Director-General of ILO gave the keynote speech and moderated a panel discussion on the role and responsibilities of parliaments in respect of the work of the United Nations.

10. At the end of the Conference, the Speakers adopted a declaration that underscored the role of parliaments as the embodiment of democracy and the central institution through which the will of the people was expressed, laws were passed and Governments were held accountable. The Speakers asserted that the United Nations should remain the cornerstone of global cooperation and that national parliaments were ready and willing to contribute to that end.

11. The Speakers also proposed a strategic partnership between IPU and the United Nations, calling upon the latter to avail more frequently to the political and technical expertise that IPU could provide. Furthermore, they called on parliaments to be active in international affairs by contributing to and monitoring international negotiations, overseeing the enforcement of what is adopted by Governments, and ensuring national compliance with international norms and the rule of law, as well as exercising vigilance in scrutinizing international organizations. To achieve these objectives, the Speakers concluded that IPU should serve as a unique global parliamentary counterpart of the United Nations.

Annual parliamentary hearings at the United Nations

12. The annual parliamentary hearings at the United Nations have developed over the past two years to become a unique forum in which parliamentarians from around

the world provide input to some of the most important and urgent items on the United Nations agenda. The 2004 hearing with the theme "From disarmament to lasting peace: defining the parliamentary role" examined a cluster of issues related to disarmament, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The 2005 hearing took place under the theme of "Our shared responsibility for a stronger United Nations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century". The main session focused on the latest proposals for the United Nations reform, followed by sessions on some of the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit, namely, the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, the principles of the responsibility to protect and the renewed commitment by all States in the global fight against terrorism. The report of the hearing was circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 57/47 of 21 November 2002.

World Summit on the Information Society

13. Delegates to the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society included parliamentarians from 29 countries attending a parliamentary meeting organized by IPU and the Tunisian Chamber of Deputies, in cooperation with UNESCO. The meeting focused on access to information.

14. Panellists at the parliamentary meeting shared their experience in developing freedom of information acts, and the principles underlying such legislation. Emphasis was made that laws on freedom of information offer a formidable tool for increasing government transparency and accountability. It was noted that as Governments are becoming more transparent, the notion of open government has found expression through new legislation and institutions and that 90 per cent of the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have a freedom of information act and an ombudsman Office. Participants also underlined the potential of the Internet to enrich and renew democracy if parliaments continue their efforts to use it for communication between citizens and their elected representatives. A global centre for information and communication technology in Parliament was launched at the World Summit on the Information Society as a joint initiative of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs and IPU to offer a timely boost to parliaments' capacity to make effective use of information and communication technology.

Other events at the United Nations

15. During the period under review, the IPU representatives were invited to participate in the meetings of the United Nations where their expertise on issues related to democracy, human rights or women's rights was particularly relevant. Such meetings included:

(a) The event convened by the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs to launch the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, which IPU endorsed at its 113th Assembly;

(b) A panel discussion on the theme "Women and elections: the participation of women in post-conflict elections", organized by the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues;

(c) A panel discussion on governance in least developed countries, convened by UN-OHRLLS.

16. In October 2005, IPU was also invited to address the Security Council open debate on women, peace and security.

IV. Peace and security

Middle East

17. The President of the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions spent one week in Israel and Palestine on the occasion of the Palestinian presidential elections in January 2006. The visit provided an opportunity to follow the poll on election day, the preparations and the post-election evaluation. The Committee President met several Palestinian leaders in Ramallah and Gaza, and the leader of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Meanwhile, the Committee itself has continued to stage direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian legislators.

Iraq

18. From 28 to 30 January 2005, the out-of-country voting for the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq was conducted in 14 countries with sizeable Iraqi expatriate populations. At the invitation of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, IPU participated in the monitoring of the out-of-country voting exercise. IPU fielded parliamentarians to act as monitors in seven countries: Canada, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Netherlands, Sweden and the Syrian Arab Republic. The IPU staff coordinated the observer mission from Amman, Jordan.

19. Sustained work in Iraq itself is constantly impeded by major security concerns. IPU has been in contact with the Iraqi authorities and together with the United Nations Development Programme, has designed an assistance programme to the interim legislature and laid the groundwork for a longer-term programme for a permanent parliament. The IPU Secretary-General travelled to Baghdad to discuss the project, and attended the inaugural session of Iraq's Transitional National Parliament. IPU and UNDP are working together closely to finalize the project.

Afghanistan

20. IPU, jointly with UNDP, has been working towards the establishment of a new parliament in Afghanistan since late 2004. After an IPU-led assessment mission in November 2004, the programme of Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature (SEAL) was implemented under the supervision of UNDP. IPU is providing the UNDP/SEAL project team with advice on allowances, equipment and staff matters. The Union also organized study visits for staff of the Afghan Parliament to the Parliaments of Indonesia and Morocco, a seminar for staff on parliamentary processes and best practices, and training sessions in Kabul for parliamentary staff on recording of proceedings. In December 2005, IPU

participated in the working sessions with various stakeholders in Kabul prior to the first session of parliament in Afghanistan in more than 30 years.

Parliamentary oversight of the security sector

21. In July 2005, a seminar on parliamentary oversight of the security sector in Latin America was held in Montevideo. The event, which is part of a series of seminars seeking to facilitate implementation of recommendations included in an IPU guide on the same theme, was organized in cooperation with the Parliaments of Argentina and Uruguay and the Geneva-based Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

National reconciliation

22. A regional seminar on the role of parliaments in national reconciliation in Africa was held in Bujumbura in November at the invitation of the Parliament of Burundi, in cooperation with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). The history of Burundi became the starting point for a debate on the use of transitional justice mechanisms for reconciliation. All participants concurred that members of parliament everywhere in Africa were ideally placed to initiate a national debate on identifying the right combination of these mechanisms that would serve the reconciliation process in their own countries.

23. In July, IPU and IDEA released a handbook entitled "Making reconciliation work: the role of parliaments", which provides a number of innovative examples of transitional justice experiences and concrete suggestions for parliamentarians as they support reconciliation.

V. Economic, social and environmental development

Financing for development

24. As part of the overall follow-up on the Monterrey Consensus, IPU and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a parliamentary panel discussion on innovative forms of financing for development in June 2005. Bringing together a select group of parliamentarians with expertise and influence in the field, the event provided the United Nations with a clear picture of the political support in parliaments for innovative forms of development financing. Its final report was submitted as a contribution to the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

Sustainable development

25. In April 2005, IPU and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research convened the inaugural conference of their joint capacity-building initiative for parliaments on sustainable development. The event took place in Paris at the French Senate. Parliamentarians met to discuss topics such as water, climate change and energy, as well as trade for sustainable development. A second event of the series

took place in November 2005 in Beirut, organized by the two partners in cooperation with the Arab IPU, and hosted by the Lebanese Parliament. The meeting looked at water management as an essential factor in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region.

Least developed countries

26. IPU has supported the Mid-term Comprehensive Global Review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the least developed countries since its inception. It invited member parliaments in the least developed countries to play an active part in the national reporting exercise, and provided direct input to a major study by UNDP and UN-OHRLLS on democracy and development in the least developed countries. It also worked closely with UN-OHRLLS to organize a joint parliamentary meeting on governance in the least developed countries region as part of the programme of events during the high-level meeting of the General Assembly in September 2006.

Trade and development

27. IPU plays a leading role in promoting the parliamentary dimension of the World Trade Organization with a view to enhancing its democratic transparency and accountability. The latest session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization, which is instrumental in bringing a meaningful parliamentary contribution to ongoing multilateral trade negotiations, was held in conjunction with the sixth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference held in Hong Kong (China) in December 2005.

Child trafficking

28. IPU and UNICEF published a handbook for parliamentarians on child trafficking, which was launched during the 112th IPU Assembly in the presence of the Executive Director of UNICEF.

Child protection

29. The regional seminar for parliaments of the Asia-Pacific region on the theme "Developing a protective framework for children" was held in Hanoi in February 2006, at the invitation of the National Assembly of Viet Nam. The seminar, which was organized jointly with UNICEF, brought together members of parliament from 13 Asia-Pacific countries. It provided an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the tools at parliaments' disposal to develop a protective environment for children. Attention focused on two specific themes: "trafficking of children" and "violence against children". The final report highlighted the need for developing and enforcing good implementing legislation for international instruments concerning children.

30. At the 112th Assembly, IPU and UNICEF held a panel discussion on violence against women and children in armed conflict, and at the 114th IPU Assembly, IPU again joined forces with UNICEF, this time for a panel discussion on children and HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS

31. IPU is working with UNAIDS and UNDP to generate support within parliaments for the 2001 Declaration of Commitments on HIV/AIDS. As a first joint initiative, a discussion was held in New York in September 2005 on the theme "The role of parliamentarians in national policy and the AIDS response". The aim of the event, which was moderated by the Executive Director of UNAIDS, was to better harness the potential of parliaments both in their roles as policymakers and through their links with their constituents in the fight against HIV/AIDS, in the wake of the comprehensive IPU resolution on the subject adopted at the 112th Assembly in Manila.

32. Building on this initiative, a parliamentary caucus was held in New York on 1 June 2006, in the context of the United Nations high-level review meeting on HIV/AIDS. The meeting, attended by chairpersons and members of specialized parliamentary committees, called for greater awareness within parliaments about HIV/AIDS, a stronger political response and more dialogue between parliaments and grass-roots HIV/AIDS organizations. The caucus led to the establishment of an IPU advisory group that would guide IPU members' action to work for international HIV/AIDS commitments and policies. Representatives from UNAIDS, UNDP and UNICEF will work with the new advisory group to help coordinate action between IPU, national parliaments and the United Nations system.

VI. Democracy and human rights

Strengthening parliaments in post-conflict management

33. In 2005, IPU worked with UNDP in developing guidelines designed to boost the capacity of parliaments in countries devastated by conflict. The two organizations conducted several regional studies on the functioning of parliaments in conflict and post-conflict environments and the role of such parliaments in helping to instil peace. In June 2005, IPU participated in a regional workshop in Nairobi designed to distil lessons from the studies.

34. In July 2005, IPU, in cooperation with UNDP, hosted a working group meeting in Geneva to look at the findings of the studies and discuss guidelines that could be useful to donors and providers of assistance to parliaments. The guidelines were presented at a major conference in Brussels in April 2006, and submitted to national parliaments on the occasion of the 114th IPU Assembly in Nairobi.

35. IPU continued its traditional work of providing technical and advisory assistance to parliaments throughout the world. Highlights for the period under review included projects in the parliaments of Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Uruguay. These activities are carried out under projects that entail cooperation with other partners, mainly UNDP and the European Commission. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency is another strong sponsor.

36. IPU also held a first series of consultations with the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, exploring avenues for future cooperation in Burundi and other countries.

Global governance

37. IPU continued its close cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in developing a strong parliamentary component of the main United Nations processes in the realm of global governance. As a result, the Sixth International Conference on New or Restored Democracies (Doha, November 2006) will follow a tripartite format (Governments-parliaments-civil society) and will feature a parliamentary forum on the theme "Dialogue, tolerance and freedom of expression as cornerstones of democracy". Similarly, the 2007 Global Forum on Reinventing Government will seek to attract a robust parliamentary contribution.

38. Both of these events will serve to assess the 2006 IPU publication *Parliaments and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century: A Guide to Good Practice*. Taking into account the good and workable practices observed in many national parliaments, the guide proposes standards and offers a series of recommendations aimed at making the institution of parliament more representative, accessible, accountable and effective.

39. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs also supports the strengthening of information systems of parliaments in Africa through information and communication technologies. The project on the theme "Strengthening Parliaments' information systems in Africa" aims to support the eight participating legislatures of Angola, Mozambique, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda, as well as the African Union Pan African Parliament, to provide citizens, parliamentarians and parliamentary officials with enhanced access to information.

Human rights

40. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) signed a memorandum of understanding with IPU in 1999 that covers a broad range of topics. Within this framework, the Research and Right to Development Branch of OHCHR engaged in a series of joint activities in 2005 focusing on the publication of the handbook on human rights for parliamentarians and the organization of a seminar on the challenges in implementing legislation affecting indigenous peoples.

41. At the 113th IPU Assembly in Geneva, the IPU President jointly, with the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, launched the IPU/OHCHR handbook on human rights for parliamentarians. The handbook is intended for parliamentarians who aspire to familiarize themselves with the principles, standards and mechanisms of the international human rights system. It contains detailed account of States' obligations for the protection and promotion of human rights and provides practical suggestions for parliament's contribution to the respect and protection of human rights.

42. IPU and OHCHR held a seminar at IPU headquarters in July 2005 on the challenges in implementing legislation affecting indigenous peoples. The seminar contributed to a better understanding of the obstacles to the implementation of national laws designed to bring benefits to indigenous peoples. It also provided an opportunity for an exchange of experiences among numerous indigenous parliamentarians. The results of the meeting will be reported to the Human Rights

Council through the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples.

43. OHCHR is currently exploring the possibility of engaging parliamentarians more systematically in various components of its programmes including democracy, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, promoting gender equality and securing the human rights of women, the rights of persons with disabilities, racism and racial discrimination.

44. A seminar on freedom of expression organized by IPU and Article 19, an expert organization in the field, was held in Geneva in May 2005. The adequate protection of the freedom of speech of members of parliament and the legitimate restrictions on this freedom were the main points of debate among members of parliamentary human rights bodies and regional and international experts.

45. During the period under review, IPU and UNHCR published a handbook on statelessness. The handbook, which was launched at the 113th IPU Assembly in October 2005, outlines issues of statelessness and proposes possible solutions and actions that parliamentarians can take to prevent and resolve them.

46. Following the conclusion in 1997 of a cooperation agreement between IPU and UNESCO, efforts are currently under way to designate UNESCO focal points in national parliaments. The two organizations co-published a guide to parliamentary practice in 2003, outlining the methods of work of parliaments. It is intended for use by the UNESCO secretariat, including its field offices and National Commissions. Another joint publication on education for all is also planned.

VII. Gender issues

Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

47. The latest seminars in this series took place at the IPU headquarters in Geneva in October 2004 and 2005. Organized in cooperation with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW), they targeted members of parliaments of those States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women whose reports were currently under consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The purpose of the seminars is to identify opportunities for strengthening the role of parliament both in the reporting process, including the preparation and presentation of reports, and in follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations regarding the reporting State.

Commission on the Status of Women

48. The forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women was held to review and appraise the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. IPU and UNDAW held a one-day parliamentary event on the theme "Beyond Beijing: towards gender equality in politics", which focused on the strategic objectives of women in power and decision-making and the role of parliaments in

meeting these objectives. On that occasion, the map, Women in Politics 2005, jointly produced by IPU and UNDAW, was presented.

49. During the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which looked at the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels, IPU and UNDAW held a parliamentary event on the theme "Gender equality: making a difference through parliament". This meeting provided a contribution to the deliberations of the fiftieth session of the Commission regarding the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes. Parliamentarians shared experiences on the role of women in politics and considered mechanisms to strengthen the capacity of parliaments to address gender equality. In its decision on the future organization and methods of work of the Commission (2006), the Commission noted with appreciation the continuation of the annual parliamentary meetings organized by IPU.

Meeting of women Speakers of Parliament during the 2006 session of the Commission on the Status of Women

50. A meeting of women Speakers of Parliament on the theme "Gender equality on the legislative agenda: the role of women presiding over parliaments" was held to coincide with the opening of the fiftieth session of the Commission. It was convened as a follow-up to the meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament organized during the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments in September 2005.

51. The session examined the status of women and men in decision-making, and considered how women were changing parliaments. Participants concluded by proposing that a meeting of women Speakers be held annually, coinciding with the Commission on the Status of Women and adopting the themes under discussion at the Commission. The findings of the meeting were presented by Ntlhoi Motsamai, Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho, to the IPU-UNDAW parliamentary event on the theme "Gender equality: making a difference through parliament", held at United Nations Headquarters on 1 March 2006.

Parliament, budget and gender

52. In cooperation with UNIFEM, IPU held a regional seminar on parliaments and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective for Latin American parliaments, in September 2005. The National Assembly of El Salvador hosted the seminar, the sixth regional event in the series. The seminar offered parliamentarians of eight Latin American and Caribbean countries an opportunity to exchange views, compare their experiences and deepen their understanding of the budgetary process and of the tools they can use to make an effective contribution in this field. The Spanish version of the handbook for parliamentarians entitled *Parliament, the budget and gender*, produced by IPU, UNDP, UNIFEM and the World Bank Institute, was also presented at the El Salvador seminar.

Female genital mutilation

53. As part of its action to put an end to excision, IPU and UNICEF supported the African Parliamentary Union conference on violence against women, abandoning female genital mutilation: the role of national parliaments. The event, hosted by the National Assembly of Senegal in December 2005, was attended by parliamentarians from more than 20 parliaments, traditional and religious leaders, and representatives of United Nations agencies and civil society organizations. The objective of the conference was to secure the political commitment of members of parliament in Africa to relinquishing female genital mutilation. At the close of debate, the parliamentarians unanimously adopted a Final Declaration to end female genital mutilation and cutting.

VIII. Inter-Parliamentary Union secretariat

54. The Office of the Permanent Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union to the United Nations in New York continues to be instrumental in the identification and implementation of activities carried out between the two organizations.

55. Under the observer status of IPU at the General Assembly (resolution 57/32) and the entitlement for the official IPU documents to be circulated to the Assembly (resolution 57/47), an ad hoc consultation and coordination mechanism has been developed between IPU, the relevant United Nations departments and the Office of the President of the General Assembly, thus allowing for greater parliamentary support to the United Nations. Considering the scope of this growing cooperation, a more systematic consultation mechanism could be considered.

IX. Conclusions

56. **The Secretary-General welcomes the close and substantive relationship between the United Nations and IPU, which continues to grow in scope, in particular since IPU was granted observer status by the General Assembly and since the 2005 World Summit.**

57. **He acknowledges the key contribution of national parliaments and IPU to meeting the major goals and objectives of the international community.**

58. **The Secretary-General welcomes the conclusions of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments and supports efforts to forge a strategic partnership between the United Nations and IPU, in pursuit of world peace, security, development and democratic progress.**

59. **He welcomes the annual parliamentary hearing held at the United Nations and other specialized parliamentary meetings in the context of major United Nations conferences and events and calls for the further development of such joint United Nations-IPU events.**

60. **He invites IPU to work closely with the United Nations in considering opportunities to devise a permanent mechanism for consultation and coordination through a supplementary administrative arrangement, with a view to building greater coherence in the work of the two organizations and**

maximizing parliamentary support for the work of the United Nations, while noting that this would require additional resources. Ways of ensuring a more systematic involvement of IPU in the elaboration of system-wide strategies for consideration by the United Nations system and the Chief Executives Board could also be explored.

61. The Secretary-General believes that opportunities could also be explored in establishing close cooperation, as appropriate, between IPU and the new United Nations bodies: the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Democracy Fund.

62. The Secretary-General invites the Economic and Social Council to consider an active IPU involvement in the implementation of the new functions devolved to it by the 2005 World Summit, namely, the annual ministerial-level substantive reviews of progress in conference implementation and the biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum. IPU engagement in the work of the Council could be facilitated through the participation of IPU membership in preparatory processes at the country level, regional and global levels.

Part Four
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

1. The report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction for the year 2004 was submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of article IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (General Assembly resolution 55/283, annex).

2. The report of the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization covering the year 2005 was submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of article IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreement to Regulate the Relationship between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (General Assembly resolution 54/280, annex).

3. Since only a limited number of copies of the report were made available, it was not possible to make a full distribution. Delegations are therefore requested to have the copies transmitted to them available during the discussion of the item.

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